Claims

What is claimed is:

1. In a computer controlled user interactive display system, a display interface implementation for directing a user's attention to specific selectable items on a display screen with crowded selectable items comprising;

user controlled means for moving an on-screen pointer to approach said selectable items; and

means for highlighting all items in any set of a plurality of said items wherein each item in the set is within a predetermined distance of said approaching pointer.

2. The computer controlled user interactive display system of claim 1 wherein said selectable items are icons.

3. The computer controlled user interactive display system of claim 2 further including means for ending said highlighting of each of said highlighted icons when the pointer moves outside of said predetermined distance for said icon.

4. The computer controlled user interactive display system of claim 2 further including means for ending said highlighting of each of said highlighted icons after a predetermined period of time.

5. The computer controlled user interactive display system of claim 2 wherein said means for highlighting sequentially highlight each icon in said set.

6. The computer controlled user interactive display system of claim 2:

wherein said means for sequentially highlighting said set of icons highlight each icon in the set for a defined period of time; and

further including means for enabling the user selection of each sequentially highlighted item during said period of time.

7. The computer controlled user interactive display system of claim 6 wherein the icons in said set overlap each other.

8. A method for directing a user's attention to specific selectable items on a display screen with crowded selectable items in computer controlled user interactive display systems comprising:

moving an on-screen pointer to approach said selectable items; and

highlighting all items in any set of a plurality of said items wherein each item in the set is within a predetermined distance of said approaching pointer.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein said selectable items are icons.

10. The method of claim 9 further including the step of ending said highlighting of each of said highlighted icons when the pointer is moved outside of said predetermined distance for said icon.

11. The method of claim 9 further including the step of ending said highlighting of each of said highlighted icons after a predetermined period of time.

12. The method of claim 9 wherein said step of highlighting sequentially highlights each item in said set.

13. The method of claim 9 wherein said step of sequentially highlighting said set of icons highlight each icon in the set for a defined period of time; and

further including the step of enabling the user selection of each sequentially highlighted item during said period of time.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the icons in said set overlap each other.

15. A computer program having program code included on a computer readable medium for directing a user's attention to specific selectable items on a display screen with crowded selectable items in computer controlled user interactive display systems comprising:

user controlled means for moving an on-screen pointer to approach said selectable items; and

means for highlighting all items in any set of a plurality of said items wherein each item in the set is within a predetermined distance of said approaching pointer.

16. The computer program of claim 15 wherein said selectable items are icons.

17. The computer program of claim 16 further including means for ending said highlighting of each of said highlighted icons when the pointer moves outside of said predetermined distance for said icon.

18. The computer program of claim 16 further including means for ending said highlighting of each of said highlighted icons after a predetermined period of time.

19. The computer program of claim 16 wherein said means for highlighting sequentially highlights each icon in said set.

20. The computer program of claim 16 wherein said means for sequentially highlighting said set of icons highlight each icon in the set for a defined period of time; and

further including means enabling the user selection of each sequentially highlighted item during said period of time.

21. The computer program of claim 20 wherein the icons in said set overlap each other.

22. In a computer controlled user interactive display system, a display interface implementation for directing a user's attention to specific selectable items on a display screen with crowded selectable items comprising;

user controlled means for moving an on-screen pointer to approach a cluster of said selectable items; and

means for sequentially highlighting each item in said cluster when said approaching pointer is within a predetermined distance from said cluster.

23. In a computer controlled user interactive display system, a display interface implementation for directing a user's attention to specific selectable items on a display screen with crowded selectable items comprising:

user controlled means for moving an on-screen pointer to approach a cluster of said selectable items;

means for determining whether the items in said cluster have sufficient separation for said pointer to select separate items in said cluster; and

means responsive to said determining means for sequentially highlighting each item in said cluster when there is insufficient separation.

24. The computer controlled user interactive display system of claim 23 wherein each item is activated for selection when highlighted.

25. A method for directing a user's attention to specific selectable items on a display screen with crowded selectable items in computer controlled user interactive display systems comprising:

moving an on-screen pointer to approach a cluster of said selectable items; and

sequentially highlighting each item in said cluster when said approaching pointer is within a predetermined distance from said cluster.

26. A method for directing a user's attention to specific selectable items on a display screen with crowded selectable items in computer controlled user interactive display systems comprising:

moving an on-screen pointer to approach a cluster of said selectable items;

determining whether the items in said cluster have sufficient separation for said pointer to select separate items in said cluster; and

sequentially highlighting each item in said cluster responsive to a determination that there is insufficient separation.

27. The method of claim 26 wherein each item is activated for selection when highlighted.

28. A computer program having program code included on a computer readable medium for directing a user's attention to specific selectable items on a display screen with crowded selectable items in computer controlled user interactive display systems comprising:

user controlled means for moving an on-screen pointer to approach a cluster of said selectable items; and

means for sequentially highlighting each item in said cluster when said approaching pointer is within a predetermined distance from said cluster.

29. A computer program having program code included on a computer readable medium for directing a user's attention to specific selectable items on a display screen with crowded selectable items in computer controlled user interactive display systems comprising:

user controlled means for moving an on-screen pointer to approach a cluster of said selectable items;

means for determining whether the items in said cluster have sufficient separation for said pointer to select separate items in said cluster; and

means responsive to said determining means for sequentially highlighting each item in said cluster when there is insufficient separation.

30. The computer program of claim 29 wherein each item is activated for selection when highlighted.